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СЛЕДЫ ГУННОВ В ИБЕРИИ

Великий союз всадников – гунны – создали сильную империю во Внутренней Азии. Некоторые их ветви постепенно переместились на запад с I века до н.э., и достигли края Европы или Кавказского региона, где и обосновались. Многие ученые отрицали, что гунны долгое время оставляли следы в этом регионе, несмотря на то, что считается, что его населяли сарматы и аланы. Недавние археологические сравнительные исследования и антропологический результат подтвердили их присутствие не только в северной части Кавказа, но и на Южном Кавказе. Основываясь на этих результатах, я искала дополнительные доказательства древнего поселения гуннов, поскольку была уверена, что там жили гунны, ввиду того, что венгерские хроники средневековья фиксировали историю маеотического региона, связывающего странствия венгерского народа. Во время моих исследований я выявила общего предка кавказских иберийских и венгерских королей – великого охотника Нимрода. Между тем, венгерская хроника связывала Нимрода с гуннами, грузинские археологические находки - полихромный стиль – показали сходство с небротидных сокровищ с гуннами, что не может являться совпадением. Более того, я обнаружила три значительных сходных мотива как на Кавказе, во Внутренней Азии, так и в Карпатском бассейне, которые связаны с гуннами. Таким образом, древнее присутствие гуннов на территории Южного Кавказа, современной Грузии, было подтверждено четырьмя дисциплинами позднего античного периода.

Ключевые слова: гунны, полихром, Кавказ, Нимрод, Иберия, Грузия, венгры, Армази, Каспийские ворота, жертвоприношения

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TRACES OF HUNS IN IBERIA

A great horsemen alliance, the Huns has created a strong empire in Inner Asia. Some branches moved gradually westward from the 1st century BC and they reached the edge of Europe or the Caucasus region, where they settled down. Many scholars denied that Huns left traces in this region for a long time, in spite of that scholars thought that Sarmatians

and Alans populated it. The recent archaeological comparative researches and the anthropological result confirmed their presence not only the Northern part of Caucasus, but the Southern Caucasus as well. Based on these results, I also looked for additional evidences on the ancient settlement of the Huns. I was sure that Huns lived there, because the Hungarian chronicles of the Middle Ages recorded the history of the Maotic region connecting the wandering of Hungarian people. During my research I realised that Caucasian Iberian and Hungarian kings had a common ancestor: Nimrod, the great hunter. Meanwhile the Hungarian chronicle connected Nimrod with Huns, the Georgian archaeological finds-polychrome style – showed similarities with Nebrotids treasures with Huns. It would not be a coincidence. Moreover, I found three significant similar motifs both in Caucasus, Inner Asian and Carpathian basin, which related to Huns. Thus, the ancient presence of Huns in the territory of South Caucasus, present day Georgia were confirmed by four disciplines in the late Ancient period.

Keywords: Huns, polychrome, Caucasus, Nimrod, Iberia, Georgia, Hungarians, Armazi, Caspian Gates, building sacrifice

It is widely accepted view in historical and archaeological literature that Northern-Caucasus region was populated mostly by Sarmatians and Alans during the 2-3th century, and Huns appeared later, only in the 4-5th centuries and they occupied only some parts of the region. Few years ago Sergey Botalov archaeologist attempted to change this view showing in his study the early presence of the Huns in the Caucasus already in from the 2nd century CE, inside the late Sarmatian archaeological finds. [7]. In 2017 an international anthropological research revealed that the local artificially modified skulls linked to the Huns not Alans, as previously thought. Based these evidences, I tried to find additional Hunnic traces in that region or present day Georgia.

The local historical records are very important to be looked for early Huns in the Caucasus region. Gabor Balint (1844-1913) a great Hungarian scholar was the first, who presented the earliest historical records about the Huns in the Caucasus in Hungary [2. 31.] He found they did not arrive there around the 370s but that they had already been there at the beginning of the 2nd century AD. Based on Dionysius Periegetes, geographer of Emperor Hadrianus (117-138) who mentioned the Huns in 117 AD: «...after the Unns the Caspians and then followed by the Albanians and Kaduses who lived in the mountainous region» [2. 31]. Claudius Ptolemy in his work titled Geography wrote about the Huns, too. He drew their homeland precisely on the map: they dwelled between the Bastards and the Roxolans. [2. 31.]

Written data on the Huns have multiplied from the 3rd century as at that time the Huns along with the members of the Armenian Arsacid dynasty overran Persia many times. Agathangelos reported on these events in his work on the life of Saint Gregory. Based on this, we can find out what role the Huns filled in the series of political events in the region [21. 140.]. It was recorded that in 227 AD

Khosrov, ruler of Armenia together with the Iberians, Albanians and the Huns invaded Persia. «Artashir, a Sassanian put an end to the Parthian kingdom when he murdered the Parthian ruler Artavan. He united the Persian forces, and now they rejected Parthian sovereignty and chose him as their leader. Khosrov, king of the Armenians, was greatly distressed by that news and soon took up arms to revenge Artavan's death. He gathered Albanian and Iberian forces and called on the Huns to invade Persian territory. Khosrov and his armies ravaged the land, destroying towns and cities, trying to overthrow the Persian kingdom and wipe out its civilization. Even though the Parthians refused to help him, having attached them to Artashir, Khosrov was able to inflict devastating losses on the Persians. Then Khosrov returned victoriously to the Armenian city of Vagharshapat to celebrate his conquests and reward his soldiers, whom he showered with gifts and sent home. He also honoured his family's ancestral worship sites, with white oxen, white rams, white horses and mules, and gave a fifth of all his plundered booty to the priests. He similarly honoured the temples of the idol-worshipping cults throughout the land» [21. 141.]

Later on, Tiridates (286-341) who was also Arsacid ran a campaign against Persians with Hun troops. In the era around 320 AD Moses Khorenaci recorded the following: «Tiridates chased the Khazars and the Basils all the way to the country of the Huns» [21.144.] This late note confirms that the Huns had their own sovereign state in the Caucasus. Although the written records are fragmented and discontinuous, we can draw the conclusion from the data available that the Huns gradually spread their authority over the peoples living by the Sea of Azov and on the North coast of the Black Sea. The late antique Albanian and Armenian sources mentioned Huns as Honks. We can find Honagur, who was a local Hunnic king. His name is similar to Hunugur or Onogur, which was the late name of Hungarians. But Georgian sources do not mention them at all. The reason for that is that Georgian chronicles are quite late from the 10-11th century AD, and they confused steppe peoples as Turks, Khazars, etc. [18. p. 20,28,71.] Additional evidence for presence Huns in this region those forts, which were constructed against them by Sassanid-dynasty. According to Georgian researchers, the Caucasian passages were controlled by riding peoples of that time, especially the Darial Passage, which led from northern part of Tbilisi to Alania. Modified skulls were unearthed along this way. Besides that another system of defence were created next to the Caspian sea in order to watch movement of Huns. One ending point is Derbent (the Iron Gate also was called as Gate of Huns) and the southern one is Beshbarmag, Kursan khala. [14].

Tradition of Nimrod

Nimrod or the Great Hunter is known from the Bible. His cult has preserved only in few places: Caucasus and former Hungarian Kingdom. According to the Hungarian royal record, *Chronica Pictum*, he was the ancestor of Arpad clan, who emerged from Attila. It is possible that wandering steppe tribes had this tradition, who had been submitted to Huns. Let me investigate the related historical records to clear this interesting motif. The Hungarian chronicles connected him with Huns and Hungarians. According to the Georgian chronicle of Kartlis Tskhovreba [18.18] Iberia and a large part of the Caucasus region were dominated by the descendants of Nebrotids. The chronicle listed nine rulers who belonged to this royal clan. We find similarities to the Hungarian historical chronicles – Anonymus: *Gesta Hungarorum*, Kezai Simon's *Gesta Hungarorum*, *Chronica Pictum*, *Tarihi Üngürüs*, etc. – where ancestors of Huns and Hungarians, Hunor and Magor's father was Nimrod. Only few scholars dealt with the exploration of the Hungarian Nimrod tradition, the majority of scholars accepted Pal Hunfalvy's school extreme thesis that nowhere existed cult of Nimrod just Hungarians fabricated an ancestor for themselves. József Thury (1861-1906) was the first historian who had studied the ancient history of Hungarians and tried analyses in the Caucasian region, where they emerged. According to his result, the Hungarian sources kept the location of the ancient settlement relatively accurate.

He was the first who linked the tradition of Nimrod with Huns. Relying on the Hungarian royal chronicles, he stated that geographical name Evliath or the ancient settlements of Nimrod's Empire was just in the neighbourhood of the Maeotic swamps, which is identical to the land of Chavilah in Book of Genesis, which is the Biblical Eden.

Not only is the Old Testament knows of this legendary land, but the sacred book of Zoroaster religion, the Avesta, is that the area of the lower reaches of Kür and Araxes (Araz), the old Arran province, which includes Udi, Ardzak and the Seyun province, the first inhabited place on earth. The area above is the medieval residence of the saints. There is a description of Chavilah, our Evliath province, in the Bible, according to which four rivers originate from the Garden of Eden, first on the River Pis – Thury, the Kyr River, which bypasses the entire Chavilah (Evliat) land. The Bible lists the names of three other rivers, Gikhon, Hiddikel, and Euphrates. Thury identified these sources. Based on contemporary sources, according to which the Gikhon River can be identified by the River Rias, the main river of the ancient kingdom of Colchis (Georgia and Abkhazia share today in Kolkis). The Hiddel can be the Araz River, which is today the border between Azerbaijan and Iran. The name of the fourth, Euphrates, is well known to us.

Evliath of the Hungarian chronicles could be the part of South Caucasian region, where the archaeological heritage of horsemen had been unearthed in the past hundred of year. [30.400] The Book of Treasure Cave describes that Nimrod built strong cities like Babel, Nineveh, and Rasan, Selik, Ctesiphon, and Adhorbaighan; and he made three fortresses. The chronicle mentions that Nimrod established additional cities and forts: «And in the fifteenth year of [the life of] Reu, Nimrod went up and built Nisibis, and Edessa, and Harran, which is Edessa. And Harranith, the wife of Dasan, the priest of the mountain, surrounded it with a wall, and the people of Harran made a statue of her and worshipped her». [10.145] According to Book Genesis «the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, and Accad, all of them in the land of Shinar. From that land he went into Assyria, and built Nineveh, Rehoboth-ir, Calah, and Resen between Nineveh and Calah; that is the great city». [10 Gen.10-12.]

The royal chronicle of Georgia filled out the list and said Nimrod's son Ardam founded the city of Derbent and fortresses beside the Caspian Sea, surrounded by walls, Iberian Mtskheta and Armazi. It was a mountainous fort near present Mtskheta. When Nimrod (Nebroth) divided empire among sons, Ardam got Kartli. [18.18] Many researchers believe that history of Nimrod reached Caucasian peoples through the by Syrians, who led Christian missions to the region. [16.90-95] However, a book had been printed by Janashvili in Tbilisi, which gathered the local Nimrod's tradition. Interestingly, this work differs from the Syrian ones, which means that a rich Nimrod tradition could have lived among the peoples of the Caucasus independently from Syrian or Middle-Eastern ones. We can also find information on the great king in Moses Khoreni's book on Great Armenia, which summarized the history of the Parthian Empire and recorded family tree of Nimrod, from which we can make sure that he had his offspring. «Mesdrim begot Nembrot, Nimbroth begot Bab, Bab begot Ánebi, Ánebi begot Árbel, Árbel begot Kayal, Kayal begot Árbel. Árbel begot Ninus, Ninusbegot Ninias» [21.14.] Likewise, the Kartlis Tsovreba mentions the sons of Nimrod. Because the rulers had a great harem, many of his descendants were born, who later governed one province, and the glorious actions of the great royal ancestors could survive. By comparison Genghis Khan currently has about 16 million descendants around the world. Why shouldn't it be accepted that Nimrod had many offspring in the ancient times. The Georgian chronicles, commemorate the Iberian king of Mirvan I (159-109 BC), who originated from the dynasty of Nebroth [18. 26]. The last significant king of Iberia was Vakhtang Gorgasal, who established Tbilisi, was called «heroes of Nimrod» by his contemporaries. [18.111]

According to Georgian, Hungarian, Syrian etc. ancient records, we can follow the migration of Nimrods from Upper Mesopotamia to South Caucasus. We

can confirm that Nimrod's cult existed there and some royal clans might emerged from Him.

Emergence of a new culture

The early presence of the Huns in Caucasus was difficult to identify because of several reasons. The main one that Iberian archaeological findings were listed as a heritage of local or Roman archaeological culture, although they are similar to Hunnic polychrome cloisonné style. One of the most famous gold treasures in the region is the Armaziskhev find, which is located in the Kr. They were dated to the 2nd century. These unparalleled items were found near the old Georgian capital, Mtskheta. Other Locations: Kldeeti Cemetery (3rd century BC), Ureki Inventory, Zhinvali (Hun Skulls and Polychromic Findings), Zghuderi Polychromic Objects (2-3 century BC). [14.6.]

In the polychrome style surfaces of gold objects are decorated with precious or semiprecious stones, usually dark red almandines. These stones and also pieces of glass were set within strips of gold foil, surrounded with filigree and granulation. In the cloisonné technique the gemstones or glass were set in compartments of soldered strips of metal foil, separated with filigree wire, over a strip of metal foil. Regarding the origins of the polychromic style, the scholars had different point of views. For the first time some scholar thought they belonged to Gothic or Meroving, because their burials had such findings, but they are quiet late regarding the appearance it has happened only the 5th century. The Europe continent has no any precedents of this style, but we can follow the evolution of the archaeological relics from the Inner and Central Asian findings. The polychromic style reveals a sophisticated artisanship that could only be produced by skilled masters who had extensive experience in goldsmith and in the placement of precious stones. Nandor Fettich had already pointed out that these products could be made in royal courtyards, for example in some workshops of the Hunnic Empire. [12.]

Some scholar identified them as masterpieces of Scythians and Sarmatians. [29.156] Peter Baofu [4.219.] had a theory that Goths were taken from the Scythians and the Sarmatians around the 3rd century. Hungarian archaeologist and art historians collected heritage of Hunnic archaeological finding from the Eastern regions as well. [27] Andras Alföldi attempted to determine what findings related to the Huns and separated them from other ethnics. Harhoriu, [17] Romanian archaeologist also agreed with that theory that art could be linked to the Huns However, European researchers did not pay attention to Asian findings for a quiet long time, where similar object were found and they are older than the European appearance, which is a strong evidence that style emerged in East and spread westward along with the movement of Huns. Ursula Brosseder pre-

sented a paper about the expansion of this style, linking the origins of the polychrome style to Gol mod objects. He brought up the artefacts found in Central Asia and the Caucasus, which had been regarded as Alans earlier. I myself found a prototype of this style in the Hunnic Museum of Inner Mongolia, China, where the gold items were filled with semi-precious stones. So, the archaeological findings from present-day Georgian territory can be classified here. So objects of 2-3rd centuries Armazi, Ureki etc. are typical Hunnic masterpieces, they are not belonged to Alans or Sarmatians. As I presented above, Huns arrived in the Caucasus region in the course of the 2nd century CE, and left their characteristic art there. The above findings confirm the early settlement of the Huns in the Caucasus.

Cultural memory

There are numbers of special motifs in the cultural history of the Eurasian steppe, which connected with the Huns. Some of them remained in Caucasus region as well, but only few scholar searched it. I present three of them. The best-known motif is the miraculous deer, which led Nimrod's sons, Hunor and Magor to a new homeland. The text is in the Hungarian royal chronicles below. [5.5.] Similarly, Jordanes' *Getica* [XXIV. 124.] mentions the same story about Huns, how to show the passage of Meotis passage by a deer. «At one time, while hunters of their tribe were as usual seeking for game on the farthest edge of Maeotis, they saw a doe unexpectedly appear to their sight and enter the swamp, acting as guide of the way; now advancing and again standing still. The hunters followed and crossed on foot the Maeotic swamp, which they had supposed was impassable as the sea». The magical deer also showed a location of a new capital for Iberians. According to a story, Nebrotida King Vakhtang once went to the forest for hunting. He shot died of a deer, but he dipped in the nearby hot spring, got better and ran away. At the sight of the miracle, the king cut down the trees around and established his new capital, Tbilisi. [18.151.]

The second one is related to military tactics of the Huns. They used special siege machines to occupy city walls. A famous story associated siege of Aquileia, where using a special trick to take over the city. [5.16.] According to the Hungarian Chronicle: «He demanded a saddle from each of his ten hundred thousand men, and of these saddles he made a huge heap against the circle of the wall with its towers crumbled and fell fled to an island of the sea near Aquilega, where they resolved to stay for ever». The same trick was used at city of Pingcheng, (presently Datong, China) in Inner Asia. [33.] It was also taken by the Asian Huns, but they did not light up the saddles. It may have been a part for Hunnic military tactic. Priscos recorded about the siege of Naissus in 433 that Huns had used massively wheeled siege towers and other attacking gadgets that

were cleverly moved. There is also a similar story in Kartlis Chovreba, it had happened at the end of the 9th century. Two members of the local Bagratida dynasty debated on territories Sumbat Tiezerakal attacked the town of Uplistsike. «Piling pack-saddles one on another to the top of the wall, the fortress was taken in this manner. However, Sumbat' and Konstantin became allied through marriage, Sumbat' restoring (to Konstantin) Uplistsikhe and the whole of Kartli». [18.144.] It means that this typical Hunnic motif survived for centuries in the Caucasian region as well.

A third noteworthy motif is the building sacrifice, which can be found in various ballads and stories from Inner Asia via the Caucasus to the Carpathian Basin and spread over to Balkan as well. Using this method, the fortresses and the walls would be very strong and nobody would be able to devastate. Previously, I have summed up the most famous stories from the whole region, and now I just present the most significant ones. [25. 99-114.] One famous story concerns the first Chinese Emperor or Qin Shi Huang Di, who made constructed the Great Wall of China. Those workers, who had died during the construction, their body buried into the wall in order to keep it stronger. [33.] Later, in the river bend of the Yellow-River inside the Ordos, the former capital of the Southern Huns or White Castle (Tongwancheng) has been constructed the same way: its description remained in the 130th roll of Jin-shu: «When Helian Bobo designed the city of Tongwan, he appointed Chi-Gan Ali as chief of construction. Ali was master architect, but his nature was very cruel. The walls of the palace were built with great force. If a hole can be drilled on the wall, he (Chi-gan Ali) immediately killed the wall builder and incorporated his body into the wall». [25. 110.]

We have parallel in present day Georgia also. According to the story. The local prince wanted to build a castle, but what the workers built in the daytime was collapsed at night. The prince asked a Persian priest what to do. He advised to bury the only son of a widow, Zurab. 1 [31. 50.] With this special sacrifice, they were able to build walls and fortresses stably.

Thanks to the archaeological findings, historical sources and historical folklore texts across Eurasian steppe region, we are able to identify relics of the Huns in both Asia and Europe. According to the evidences, we can state that Huns had influenced the Caucasian region, their heritage left in some places, e.g. present Georgia.

¹ Vargyas, 1959.59.

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